

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Status

Claims 1-9 and 11-34 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 11-13, 18-25 and 31-33 have been rejected, and claims 9, 14-17 and 26-30 have been objected to by the Examiner. Claims 12, 14, 24 and 26 are herein canceled. Claim 10 was previously canceled. Claims 1, 13, 15-18, 22, 25 and 27-30 are herein amended. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 11-13, 18, 19, 21-25, and 31-33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,556,696 (Summers), and U.S. Patent No. 6,630,937 (Kallergi), and further in combination with U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0006216 (Armato). Claims 3 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Summers and Kallergi and further in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,119,003 (Spigelman).

Applicants respectfully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 9, 14-17 and 26-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have incorporated essentially the features of claim 14 into independent claims 1 and 18 to place them and the claims which depend therefrom in condition for allowance.

Applicants have amended claims (13 and 15-17) and (22, 25 and 27-30) to bring them into conformity with amended claims 1 and 18 from which they depend respectively.

Dependent Claims

Applicants have not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicants submit that, in view of the amendments to the claims presented herein and, for at least similar reasons as why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed, *supra*, the dependent claims are also allowable. Applicants however, reserve the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims as herein presented are allowable over the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, and that the respective rejections be withdrawn. Applicants further submit that the application is hereby placed in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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